



Dedicated to Actions that Promote the Sovereignty and Safety of Women

722 St. Joseph Street, Rapid City, SD 57701

1-877-RED-ROAD (733-6723)

605-341-2050

Fax: 605-341-2472

scircle@sacred-circle.com

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To Whom It May Concern;

On December 4, 2006, Larry the Cable Guy told a "joke" on the Tonight Show using the term "squaw skank." The word "squaw" is a pejorative term that usually translates to something akin to a dirty, sexually expendable, native female object - making the word "skank" fairly redundant. There was no public outcry, no demands for apologies, therapy or consultations with any native national leaders a la Michael Richards. Basically, there was no reaction except for the laughter of the audience.

Sadly, most of us who are Native just shook our heads. Just more of the same. After all, we are used to the likes of Disney's sexualization of Pocahontas, Outkast's trivialization and sexual objectification of Native women for entertainment purposes on an awards show, American history's romanticizing of the sexual slavery of Sacajawea, the absence or demeaning of Native people in general and Native women in particular. We are used to the lies. Thanksgiving? Is it really an American tradition to invite people to come over and eat and decorate the place with the heads of their leaders on posts? Even Paula Zahn's CNN series on racism - any Indians?

Native women are the most raped, most battered, most stalked, most murdered group of women in America. Check with the Department of Justice report on violence and American Indians. They also report that the perpetrators are *not* Native 70 % of the time. The "Indian Wars" are not over. Not when *at best*, one of three Native women continue to be the targets of these crimes.

There are hundreds of missing and murdered Native women in this country. Who knows? Who cares? Amber Alert? News Break? There has to be a couple jokes in here about domestic terrorism and Homeland Security, Larry.

The so-called joke and lack of outrage is a symptom, a sign that Indian women are still the spoils of a never ending war. The joke can go on the shelf at the Smithsonian that holds a tobacco pouch made from a Native woman's genitals.

And Larry the Cable Guy tells Bob Simon on 60 Minutes, that he gets "more professional" and "better every year." Oh, he also makes upwards of \$250,000 per show. There are fewer than 40 shelters for native women who are battered within the USA borders. So how about an apology and funding a couple shelters, Larry?

As a Native woman, like most of the native women I know, I don't have time, the will or energy to deal with the likes of Larry the Cable Guy and all the people that chuckle at his and others' racist commentary. We have work to do getting basic resources, first responders, housing, medical care, safety... We have to talk to our sons, daughters, grandchildren about racism, sexism, genocide and explain why it's okay for non-Indians to tell those jokes on national TV. We have to be with our sisters, aunts, grandmothers, mothers who are raped, battered because they are native women. We need to be with our relatives who are burying and mourning the women in their families, **our** families who are being murdered at a rate not so different than US military personnel in Iraq.

Larry the Cable Guy did not act alone. Racism and misogyny require passive collusion, if not overt acts by individuals and large groups of society. Jay Leno and NBC each issuing a public apology and funding a native women's shelter would be a powerful precedent in defense of native women and the accountability of men with privilege.

Brenda Hill (Siksika), Education Coordinator / author

Karen Artichoker(Oglala/ Ho-Chunk), Director